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LETTER DATED 25 OCTOBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a declaration which was issued on 25 October by the Council of Ministers of the European Union on the subject of the situation in South Kivu.

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) John H. F. CAMPBELL
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Declaration issued on 25 October 1996 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the situation in South Kivu

The European Union, recalling its declaration of 21 October 1996, expresses its continuing grave concern about the deteriorating situation in South Kivu. This crisis continues to undermine regional and international efforts aimed at securing long-term peace and stability for the Great Lakes region. In order to prevent a further humanitarian catastrophe and possible wider conflict in the region, the European Union reiterates its call on all parties to exercise restraint and to take immediate steps to resolve the crisis by peaceful means.

Continuing to have the strong conviction that the complex problems at issue can only be resolved through early and substantive dialogue, the European Union welcomes the opportunity being offered by the authorities of both Zaire and Rwanda to pursue and reinforce the process of dialogue between their two countries.

Having been fully briefed on the current situation and the prospects for a negotiated outcome by its Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region, Mr. Aldo Ajello, who has just returned from a special mission to the countries of the region, the European Union wishes to facilitate and give its strong support to the holding of an early dialogue to resolve the crisis in South Kivu. In furtherance of this objective, the Union has mandated its Special Envoy to return as soon as possible to the Great Lakes region in order to facilitate early dialogue between the authorities of Zaire and Rwanda. It earnestly hopes that Mr. Ajello's ongoing efforts on behalf of the Union can in this manner assist the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Organization of African Unity and regional leaders to resolve peacefully the current situation in South Kivu.

The European Union believes that the current crisis in South Kivu underscores the pressing need to address effectively the enormous problems posed by the presence of over 1 million refugees and displaced persons in the Great Lakes region. The Union is prepared to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Governments in question and international donors in order to bring about an agreed and effective strategy to deal with this pervasive issue.

The Union further believes that such a strategy will be a key element in the search for a comprehensive, durable settlement of the problems of the region as a whole. It reiterates its view that a Regional Conference on Peace, Security and Stability in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity has a central role to play in the establishment of such a settlement. It calls on all parties to renew their efforts towards the holding of such a conference.